

The Examiner maintains his rejections of claims 1-3 and 5-7 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-31 of USP 6,199,995 B1 and claims 1-8 of USP 6,196,692 B1 in view of *newly cited* Jannson et al. (6,295,405) or Sonehara (4,870,484).

Analysis

Claim 1 is the only claim in independent form; therefore, the following discussion is initially directed to this independent claim.

As previously submitted, neither '995 or '692 claim a linear light source having an effective light emission region which is longer than a longitudinal direction of the incidence side surface. This feature is patentably distinguishable from these references.

In the present invention, the length of the linear light source based on the effective light emission region is determined suitably in accordance with the state of production of shade, etc. in addition to the length of the incidence side surface of the light pipe in the longitudinal direction. Thus, it is preferable that each end of the effective light emission region 12A of the linear light source 12 is protruded by a distance from a corresponding end surface of the light pipe as shown in Fig. 3.

The Examiner now relies on Jannson or Sonehara for supplementing these deficiencies of the '995 and '692 references.

Jannson is directed to a light pipe wherein the light source 306 is provided for the light pipe 302. As shown in Figs. 9 and 10, a dark region 337 and a dim region 337' are adjacent to the light source 306. As discussed at col. 6, lines 50-58, this structure provides for the dim

region to be positioned beyond an extended portion 340 of the input surface 312, and an interface 342. Thus, the dim regions are not imaged onto the output surface and do not cause an area of non-uniform illumination.

More specifically, a transition surface is provided to obscure the interface between the transition surface end and the input surface from the output viewing area. Thus, any distortion (which is typically present in these areas of interface) would not be imaged into the output.

The Examiner considers the transition surface not to be a part of the incidence side surface. Alternatively, the Examiner could be interpreting the dim region 337' as constituting a part of the effective light emission region. Applicant disagrees with either interpretation.

First, the input surface is defined as element 12 in Figure 2. As clearly shown, the input surface 12 extends across the entire side, including the transition surface areas. Thus, the length of the longitudinal direction includes the area of the transition surfaces. Turning to Fig. 9, the input surface 312 is also illustrated by dotted lines, and again appears to include the entire length, including the flat areas of the transition surfaces.

Second, the dim regions 337' are not considered to be effective light emission regions. Since these are the only lighted areas that extend beyond the longitudinal length of the incidence side surface 312, Jansson does not overcome the deficiencies of the '995 and '692 references.

Turning to Sonehara, this reference is very different from the '995 and '692 references. The fluorescent tube 7 and the associated structure of the color display device is very different from the '995 and '692 references. Moreover, none of the cited references provides the requisite motivation for modifying the '995 and '692 devices to have a linear light source having an

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effective light emission region which is longer than a longitudinal direction of the incidence side surface. It appears that the only motivation for modifying the references comes from Applicant's own disclosure.

In view of the foregoing, claim 1 is patentable.

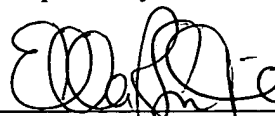
The remaining rejections are directed to the dependent claims. These claims are patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 1, by virtue of their dependency therefrom.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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